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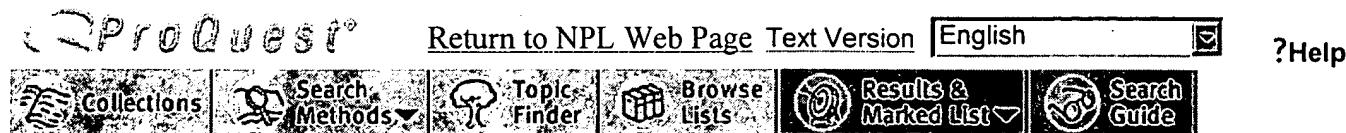
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Article 1 of 1

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SOFTBANK PLANS ITS CONTENT METERING

Electronic Commerce News; Potomac; Jun 23, 1997;

Volume: 2
Issue: 25
Start Page: 1
ISSN: 10862870
Subject Terms: RETAIL
 RETAIL, MISCELLANEOUS
 RADIO & TV DISTRIBUTORS
Companies: SOFTBANK INC.

Full Text:

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As companies experiment with ways to distribute digital content on the Internet without it being pirated, vendors continue to package their products and services to enable the distribution of that digital content. Buffalo, N.Y.-based SOFTBANK Net Solutions, spun off from SOFTBANK Services Group last year, is positioning itself to provide what it calls "rights management" features to industries wanting to take advantage of digital content distribution on the Net.

SOFTBANK, as part of its Premiere Partners Program announced today, is offering organizations a chance to get in on the ground up of The Rights Exchange. Based on technology from Intertrust Technologies Corp., The Rights Exchange is a clearing house service for companies wanting to manage digital property rights and business models in cyberspace.

"The whole market for content metering type services is in the beginning stages," says Dan Amdur, analyst in the Internet Market Strategies Service for the Boston-based Yankee Group. "We haven't even begun tapping the market yet. It's a long road ahead."

Content metering technology provides a secure method of transport to protect intellectual property online.

The Rights Exchange service enables companies to assign business rules to digital content, says SOFTBANK President and CEO Paul Bandrowski. These rules can be time-based (i.e., a user can only view the information for a designated amount of time), event based (i.e., pay-per-use model) or conditional (i.e., special pricing or upgrade pricing schemes).

"The service gives companies the ability to manage the integrity of their information," Bandrowski says. "The long-term business plan is to position us as a service solution."

"They are developing the infrastructure," Amdur says. SOFTBANK is not worried about branding their product, he adds.

"The question isn't whether the technology can be used, but whether {SOFTBANK} is ahead of the market," says Chris Stevens, electronic commerce analyst with the Boston-based Aberdeen Group. The question to ask, he

says, is "is the market really ready for a new model?"

Stevens sees great potential in the technology and services used to protect intellectual property rights or distribute content, such as law reports.

SOFTBANK is offering partnerships at two levels: A Master Services Partnership (MSP) for a \$1 million fee and a Direct Services Partnership (DSP) for a \$250,000 fee. A MSP constitutes a wholesale agreement with full resale and branding options. A DSP amounts to a retail agreement for direct service to The Rights Exchange.

①Universal Music Group (DSP) and Vger Technologies Inc. (MSP), a health care information company, are the first partners.

SOFTBANK will start educating companies on the value of The Rights Exchange in the fall. Pilot testing is expected early next year with full production later in 1998. (Dan Amdur, Yankee Group, 617/956-5000; Paul Bandrowski, SOFTBANK, 716/845-7823; Chris Stevens, Aberdeen, 617/854-5239.)

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